

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating Health Canada Usability Research

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VIEW THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY

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Background

- Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating (CFGHE), a key nutrition education tool for Canadians released in 1992, translates the science of healthy eating into a practical pattern of food choices that meets nutrient needs, promotes health and minimizes the risk of nutrition-related chronic diseases.
- Health Canada is releasing a revised Canada's Food Guide in 2007 to better respond to current challenges that individuals face in understanding and applying the Guide.
- A Web component is planned to coincide with the release of the revised Guide which will:
 - Expand on the information in the print Food Guide resource
 - Provide interactive tools to assist consumers to understand and apply the Guide
 - Provide practical information and tools for intermediaries and consumers
 - Allow for increased personalization of the Guide including better integration of multiculturalism.

Objectives

- This research focused on a new website for a revised Canada's Food Guide to include the homepage and content pages, and the 'My Food Guide' interactive tool.
- The main objectives of the research were to :
 - Assess the overall look and feel of the website;
 - Ascertain whether the layout and flow of the information presented is logical and easy to follow;
 - Assess the ease of navigation of the Canada Food Guide website; and
 - Assess the relevance and utility of the website to users.
- The primary objective of the research for the 'My Food Guide' interactive tool was to ascertain whether the layout and flow of the tool and the information is logical and easy to follow.

Approach

- 14 one-on-one interviews were conducted with the general public
 - 7 interviews were conducted in Toronto in English
 - 7 interviews were conducted in Montreal in French
- All interviews were completed from October 23 to 26, 2006
- Interviews lasted approximately 70 minutes each and included a discussion of:
 - The role of Canada's Food Guide, if any, in the respondent's daily habits;
 - The respondent's expectations for the site;
 - Task based exercises using the Canada Food Guide website;
 - Reactions to the Canada Food Guide homepage, including response to organization, usability and look & feel;
 - Reactions to content pages of the Canada Food Guide website; and
 - Ease of use, clarity, usefulness and suggestions for improvement to the 'My Food Guide' interactive tool.

Research Limitations

Readers are reminded that the results of qualitative research are not statistically representative. They, therefore, cannot be generalized to a wider population and represent only the perceptions and opinions of a select group of individuals. Notwithstanding this point, the qualitative feedback obtained through this study can provide useful direction and guidance for future refinements and enhancements to the Canada Food Guide website and the 'My Food Guide' interactive tool.

Respondent Profile

- Recruiting criteria ensured that respondents represented:
 - A mix of ages, from 18 to 44
 - Two-thirds mothers, one-third fathers
 - Parents of children between the ages of 2 and 12 years old
 - Families with eating habits ranging from 'very healthy' to 'not at all healthy'
 - A range of household incomes, from less than \$25 K to \$70 K or more annually
 - Both frequent and less frequent users of the Internet, from at least once per week to once per month or less
 - A mix of occupations
 - A mix of ethnicity
- All respondents had sought information on healthy eating or nutrition on the Internet within the past year.
- * Please refer to the appendix section for a detailed profile of all research respondents in both Toronto and Montreal.

Past Nutrition Information Sought

- Respondents reported they had looked for the following types of nutrition information on the Internet in the past year (in alphabetical order):
 - Calorie content for different foods
 - Diet plans for athletes
 - Fat content within foods
 - Food ideas within the four food groups
 - Food ideas for infants and children
 - Foods that reduce the risk of cancer and other diseases
 - General diet plans
 - Information on Omega 3's and trans fats
 - Information on vitamins and nutrients
 - Information on the contaminated spinach
 - Menu ideas for children with food allergies
 - Recipes
 - Tips to maintain a healthy and balanced diet
 - Tips to encourage children to eat fruits and vegetables
 - Weight loss and weight control information

Respondents were often seeking information for their children or their family as a whole. For the most part, respondents used search engines to begin their search and most reported they had been able to find the information they were looking for online.

Key Findings

Use and Awareness of Canada's Food Guide

Widespread awareness of Canada's Food Guide.

- Most respondents had heard of Canada's Food Guide.
- Most were familiar with the four food groups as described in Canada's Food Guide.
- Awareness was low among Canadians who were new to Canada.

Canada's Food Guide is well respected.

- Respondents who were familiar with Canada's Food Guide recognized the importance of incorporating the recommendations of the Food Guide in their daily food choices.
 - However, respondents did not always find this an easy task, given time constraints and “bad eating habits”.
 - Some respondents had the Food Guide posted on their refrigerator as a guide or a reminder to eat healthy.
- Applying Food Guide recommendations to their own and their family's daily food intake was something most respondents were interested in achieving.

Key Findings – Canada's Food Guide Website (1)

Homepage was well received by most respondents, with limited suggestions for improvement (see appendix for suggested homepage improvements).

- The strengths of the homepage were found to be:
 - The organization of the content, primarily the four main sections
 - Use of colour and images
 - The simplicity of the homepage
 - The images used for the four main sections, which were described as helpful in illustrating the content within each section
- The drawbacks of the homepage were:
 - Titles of the four main sections on the homepage, which were described as vague
 - The length and appearance of the left menu, which was distracting to some
 - Several titles of the icons were misleading (e.g. My Food Guide, Take the Guided Tour, Get Your Copy and Food Guide Basics)

Key Findings – Canada's Food Guide Website (2)

Content pages generally met expectations, with limited suggestions for improvement (see appendix for suggested improvements).

- The content pages were considered, by most, to offer appropriate layout, colours and images.
- Most participants noticed the presence of the right-menu box and felt that it was very effective in helping them see the range of relevant topics within a specific section and to explore additional areas of the site.
- The highlighted links provided within the text were considered useful in navigating to additional content.
- No clear way to return to the home page from within content pages.
- From the homepage, respondents could easily find the Oils and Fats section. However, the participants did not always clearly describe the information and resources that could be found in that section. However, not all respondents read the entire introduction page prior to making their conclusions.
- Some respondents had difficulty finding information on planning meals from the homepage.

Most respondents found the site appealing and would return to use the site in the future.

- Content of interest included examples of meal plans, recommended servings/portions for different age groups, different types of foods within the four food groups, along with suggested alternatives, information on physical activity and general tips on healthy eating.

Key Findings - My Food Guide (1)

Purpose of My Food Guide not widely understand.

- Upon reading the introduction page, respondents had a variety of expectations for the My Food Guide tool, including:
 - The tool would evaluate their daily food intake or provide customized menu ideas or tips
 - A personalized food guide based on what users liked to eat
 - A personal food plan or daily/weekly meal calendar will be provided
- On a *conceptual* level, some respondents had difficulty understanding how to interpret the final results page, in particular the portions recommended and the food examples provided.

Final product deemed to be worth the effort.

- Even though they did not fully understand some aspects of the tool, most respondents felt that it was worthwhile and many indicated that they would use it again.
 - Most respondents indicated that they would try the tool for other members of their family and would use it with their children
 - Could encourage children to eat healthier
 - The print out could remind them to choose foods from each group and could also help them select foods when grocery shopping
 - The inclusion of physical activity also helped consumers see the importance of both components for good health.

Key Findings - My Food Guide (2)

Tool offers ease of use.

- Overall, respondents were able to move through the steps of the tool relatively quickly and with ease.

Occasional usability issues did emerge.

- The most significant *usability* issues to emerge were:
 1. A few respondents did not notice the next button at the bottom of the first step, in order to navigate through the tool.
 2. Many respondents were drawn immediately to the box containing recommendations from Canada's Food Guide, once on the food selection pages, sometimes completely overlooking the instruction above the box.
 3. Occasional lack of clarity, recognition or lack of the user reading instructions, resulting in respondents selecting more than six foods for a given category.
 4. Some respondents assumed that they had to pick six examples from each column on the fruit and vegetables page.
 5. The counter was not an effective tool when placed at the bottom of each page.
 6. Some respondents did not fully understand the purpose of the final product.

Detailed Findings

Expectations for the Site

- When asked what content they expected to find on a healthy eating website offered by the Government of Canada, respondents mentioned the following (in alphabetical order):

Topics

- Advantages of organic foods
- Calorie intake guidelines for adults and children
- Content related to the four food groups:
 - General information
 - Recipes and menu ideas
 - Health benefits
 - Recommended servings
- Daily nutritional needs
- Fat content within foods
- Foods to avoid
- Foods to counter health issues
- Health risks associated with unhealthy eating

Topics

- Meal and snack ideas for children
- Meat alternatives
- Nutritional value for specific foods
- Portion sizes, daily requirements
- Tips to encourage children to eat healthy foods
- Tips to avoid obesity
- Tips on how to maintain a balanced diet
- Vegetarian menu ideas
- Ways to improve physical activity and physical activity ideas

A couple of respondents assumed that Canada's Food Guide targeted primarily adults, and that it was not geared towards children.

Task Completion Success

Task Completion Success (1)

- Respondents typically searched for information by using the links within the body of the Canada Food Guide homepage.
- While some respondents indicated that they typically scan the left navigation bar upon searching for information on an unfamiliar website, only three respondents in Toronto selected the 'Food and Nutrition' label on the left navigation menu.
- A few respondents understood that the left navigation menu related specifically to Health Canada content while the links within the body of the homepage were specific to Canada's Food Guide.
 - A few respondents scanned the left navigation bar, yet indicated that there were no relevant links based on the exercise they were attempting to complete.
 - Some respondents found the left navigation menu distracting, even though they knew that it would not lead them to the information they were looking for.
 - One respondent did not expect to see the left navigation menu within content pages. A couple of respondents did not even notice the right menu box within content pages given the availability of the left navigation menu.

Task Completion Success (2)

- Respondents tended to complete the following information retrieval tasks with ease:
 - *Where to go to find out what foods belong to a certain food group.*
 - Respondents found the information through the centre page link 'Choosing Foods'
 - A few respondents selected the 'My Food Guide' icon before successfully finding the information
 - *Where to go to find out how to make a meal that follows Canada's Food Guide*
 - Respondents found the information through the centre page link 'Using the Food Guide'
 - One respondent selected 'Food Guide Basics' as a first option and was not successful in finding the information, while another respondent selected 'Choosing Foods' before successfully finding the information
 - *Where to go to find ideas to include physical activity in your day*
 - Respondents found the information through the centre page link 'Maintaining Healthy Habits' and then by selecting the 'Achieve and Maintain a Healthy Weight' link in the right-menu box or within the body of the text
 - All respondents went into the 'Maintaining Healthy Habits' link, yet one respondent selected the 'healthy weight' link in the text, directing him to the BMI information

Task Completion Success (3)

- The following information tended to be difficult or time-consuming for respondents to locate:
 - *Where to go to find out how much food Canada's Food Guide recommends for you to have in one day*
 - Three out of the six respondents who completed this exercise selected 'Choosing Foods' to find this information, not expecting to find the information in 'Food Guide Basics'
 - One respondent selected 'Get Your Copy' before selecting 'Food Guide Basics'
 - Out of the three Toronto respondents who attempted to complete this exercise, two respondents were successful in completing this task by selecting 'Food Guide Basics'. Only one of the three Montreal respondents who attempted to find this information were successful in doing so.
 - *Where to go to find suggestions on how to prepare vegetables and fruit*
 - Only one respondent selected the 'Choosing Foods' link to find this information
 - Others links selected included 'Food Guide Basics', 'Using the Food Guide' and 'Take the Guided Tour'
 - Once in the 'Choosing Foods' section, respondents did not expect to have to click on 'Tips' within the 'Fruit and Vegetables' section
 - Most respondents eventually ended up finding the information with hesitation or with help from the interviewer
 - *Where to go to find food that is not recommended in Canada's Food Guide*
 - Respondents were unsuccessful in finding this information. Most respondents selected 'Choosing Foods' as a first option, while one respondent selected 'Food and Nutrition' from the left navigation bar
 - Respondents did not expect to find the information in the 'Maintaining Healthy Habits' section

Reactions to the Homepage

Canada's Food Guide Homepage Review (1)

Structure and Organization

- Overall, respondents felt that the organization of the content was intuitive.
- Most respondents indicated that the four main categories used to organize the content simplified site navigation.
- While some respondents clearly understood that the information on the left navigation bar related to Health Canada, others found the left menu distracting and overwhelming, especially when completing the exercises.
- The organization by topic was seen as a useful approach for organizing the content on the site.

Navigational Features

- Overall, respondents felt that it was somewhat easy to find information on the site. Most respondents were able to familiarize themselves with the navigation quickly.
- On the homepage, respondents were usually quick to identify which menu was the primary navigation tool for the Canada Food Guide site. A few respondents felt the right navigation bar could stand out more.
- While respondents felt that the four main menu categories simplified site navigation, respondents often struggled to differentiate the types of content that would be offered through each of these categories.
- Most respondents suggested using a mouse-over effect to highlight the content within each of the four main menu categories, as a means of improving navigation.

Canada's Food Guide Homepage Review (2)

Overall Look and feel

- Most respondents reacted positively to the visual design of the homepage.
- A couple of respondents suggested including images of real food on the homepage as opposed to using “cartoon” images.
- The homepage was described as “inviting”, “colourful”, “fun” and “appealing”.
- One respondent noted that *“the site would be very appealing for kids”*.

Labeling

- Several issues emerged with respect to labeling:
 - ***My Food Guide:*** A few respondents expected this link to direct them to a copy of Canada's Food Guide. It was suggested to call this “My Personal Food Guide”.
 - ***Get Your Copy:*** While most respondents expected that this link would allow them to print a copy of the Food Guide, some respondents stated that the label was not specific enough. It was suggested to change the label to “Order or Print your copy of the Food Guide” or “Get Your Copy of the Food Guide”. One respondent who selected the ‘My Food Guide’ link simply did not notice the ‘Get Your Copy’ link.
 - ***Take the Guided Tour:*** A few respondents were not sure if the guided tour involved the Food Guide or the actual website. One respondent expected this link to act as a site plan, given that he did not see a site plan link on the homepage.

Canada's Food Guide Homepage Review (3)



The 'Eating Well with' portion of the title was reported as being too small and difficult to read by a couple of respondents.

Most respondents felt that the images used beside each of these links were useful in illustrating the content available within each section. However, it was reported that the images used for Food Guide Basics and Using the Food Guide were vague and difficult to identify.

A few respondents appreciated that the Food Guide took into account the diversity among Canadians, more specifically by including a section for First Nations.

A couple of respondents in Montreal questioned the order of the four main categories on the homepage. It was suggested to have the 'Using the Food Guide' as the first menu item. One respondent suggested combining 'Using the Food Guide' and 'Choosing Foods' menu categories.

Homepage Main Menu – Content Expectations

Menu Category	Types of Content Expected
Food Guide Basics	• Recommended daily calorie intake • “Road map to using the food guide” • Guide on healthy eating • A copy of the Food Guide • What to expect in Canada’s Food Guide/”What it is and how to use it” • Background on why the Food Guide was created • “What to do first before getting started” • Information on the four food groups • Daily food requirements
Choosing Foods	• Information on the four food groups • Selecting foods recommended in the food guide • Information on vitamins and nutrients within specific types of foods • Health benefits of certain foods • Recommended food portions • Menu ideas • Foods to eat and foods to avoid • Healthy food alternatives, suggestions
Using the Food Guide	• How to use the food guide • Recipes/menus • Ways to cook/food preparation • Meal ideas or plans for different age groups • Recommended serving/portion for all types of foods • Timing of meals and snacks
Maintaining Healthy Habits	• Exercise/physical activity information and tips • Workout plans/diagrams • Tips on healthy eating • How to maintain a proper weight • How to be healthy in the long term

Many respondents described the titles used for these main categories as vague.

Reactions to Content Pages

Review of Content Pages

1. Respondents were asked to review and discuss content organization within the Food Guide Basics section of the site. They were also asked to assess the ease of navigation based on the right-menu box and to review labeling/content for clarity.
2. Respondents were asked to find information on Oils and Fats from the homepage and to describe expected content based on the text provided in the introduction page.
3. Respondents were also asked to find information on planning meals from within the homepage and to review the content and discuss their overall level of interest for the information.

Content Pages – Navigation (1)



Food Guide Basics

It's easy to eat well with *Canada's Food Guide*! Learning more about Canada's Food Guide will help you and your family know how much food you need, what types of foods are better for you, and gain ideas for including *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* in your day.

Having the amount and type of food recommended and following the tips included in Canada's Food Guide will help:

- meet your needs for vitamins, minerals and other nutrients;
- you achieve and maintain a **healthy body weight**, and;
- reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis; and
- contribute to your overall health and vitality.

Topics

Food Guide Basics

- How much food you need every day
- What is a Food Guide Serving?
- Make each Food Guide Serving count
- Enjoy eating

Choosing Foods

Using the Food Guide

Maintaining Healthy Habits

Take the Guided Tour



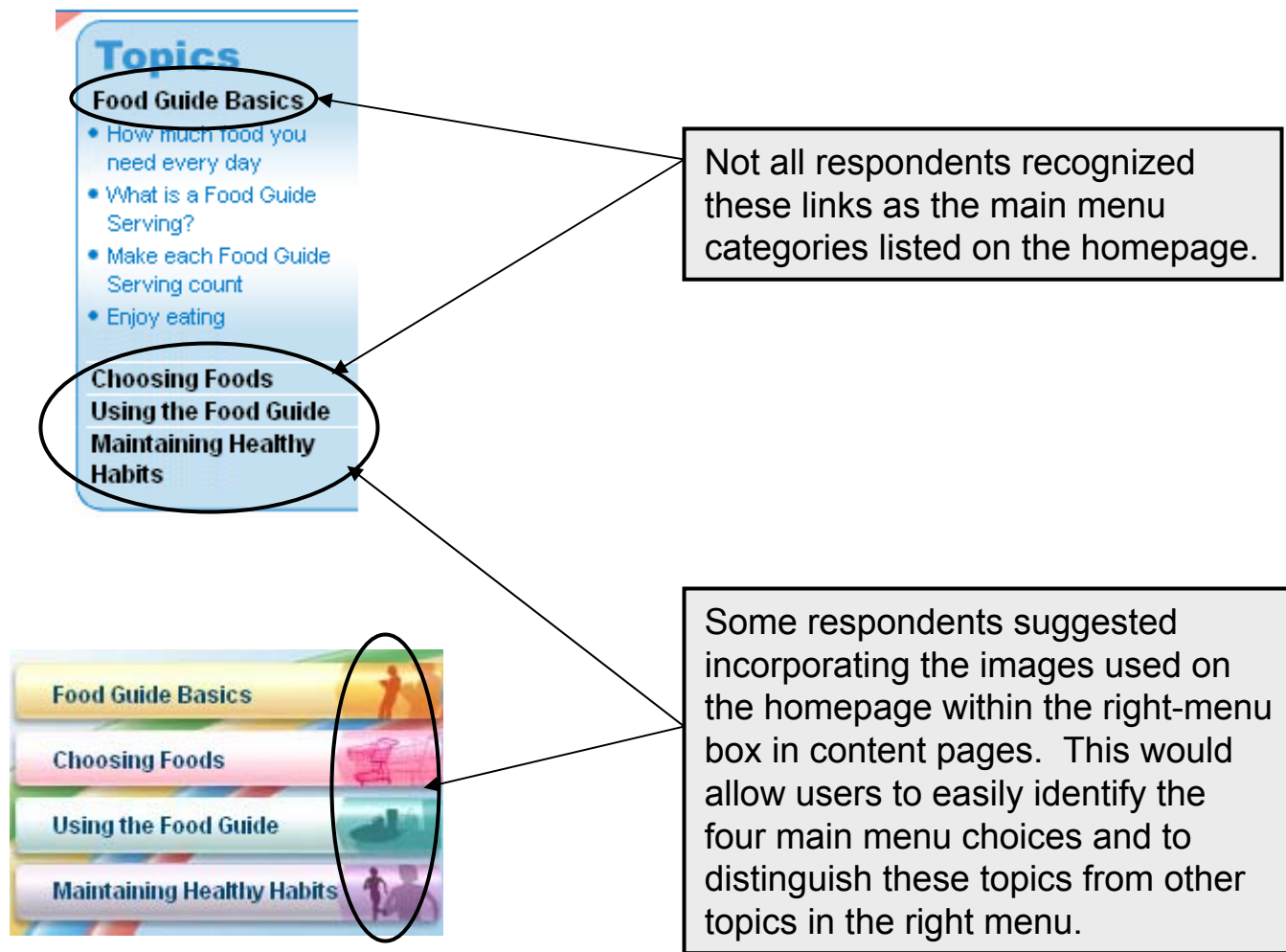
Get Your Copy

The right menu was found to be clear and was readily noticed. Most respondents felt that the right menu simplified navigation.

A couple of respondents assumed that the right menu contained content that was specific to the page they had selected, and therefore they did not realize that the four main menu categories on the homepage were brought forward in the right menu.

There was some confusion as to the definition of a Food Guide serving within the context of the "Make each Food Guide Serving Count" among a couple of Toronto respondents. Some respondents also noted that the 'Enjoy Eating' link in the right navigation bar was unclear.

Content Pages – Navigation (2)



Content Pages – Navigation (3)



Respondents were not sure how to return to the home page from within content pages. Some respondents used the bread crumb at the top of the page, while most simply used the Microsoft Explorer Back button. Among those who used the bread crumb trail, some respondents selected 'Home', which took them to the Health Canada homepage.

A few respondents were distracted by the left navigation menu and therefore did not notice the right navigation menu. "I assumed that all important information would appear on the left side." One respondent did not expect to see the left navigation bar within content pages.

Content Pages – Navigation (4)

Canada's Food Guide

Choosing Foods

It's easy to choose foods wisely when you follow Canada's Food Guide. Find out more about...

- How much food you need from each food group;
- What foods can be found in each food group;
- Choosing oils and fat;
- Beverages, and;
- Tips for choosing and preparing foods.

Topics

Food Guide Basics

Choosing Foods

- Vegetables & Fruit
- Grain Products
- Milk & Alternatives
- Meat & Alternatives
- Oils & Fats
- Beverages
- Advice for different ages and stages

Using the Food Guide

Maintaining Healthy Habits

[Take the Guided Tour](#)

[Get Your Copy](#)

Vegetables and Fruit

Grain Products

Milk and Alternatives

Meat and Alternatives

A couple of respondents who did not notice the right navigation menu within content pages appreciated having links to content available in both the body of the content page and in the right menu, such as presented within the Choosing Foods page.

A couple of respondents attempted to click on images, as opposed to the associated link to access information on the food groups.

Many respondents indicated that they preferred the content organization in the Choosing Foods section, given the small amount of text and the easily identifiable links to access additional content.

Content Pages – Look & Feel

- Many participants noticed the presence of the right-menu bar and felt that it was very effective for helping them to see the range of relevant topics within a specific section and to explore additional areas of the site.
- The look & feel of the page, including colours and images, was considered to be appropriate.
- Most, but not all respondents found the amount of text on the page to be appropriate
 - Some respondents felt they would not take the time to read all text shown, especially in the planning meals section where there was a large amount of content presented on one page. They suggested including links at the top of the page outlining all of the content. The user could then select a link of interest that would bring them to the associated content on that same page.

A few respondents expected to be able to click on these images for additional content.



Navigation to the Oils and Fats Section

- From the homepage, most respondents could easily find information on oils and fats by selecting the Choosing Foods link.
 - Most respondents selected the 'Oils and Fats' link from the right-menu box, while a few selected the link within the 'Choosing Foods' page.
 - A few respondents selected 'Food Guide Basics' or 'Using the Food Guide' as a first option, but selected 'Choosing Foods' as a second option.
 - One respondent selected 'Maintaining Healthy Habits', as this respondent had selected this link to find information on what foods were not recommended by the Food Guide.

Choosing Foods

It's easy to choose foods wisely when you follow Canada's Food Guide. Find out more about...

- How much food you need from each food group;
- What foods can be found in each food group;
- Choosing oils and fat;
- Beverages, and;
- Tips for choosing and preparing foods.



Vegetables and Fruit



Grain Products



Milk and Alternatives



Meat and Alternatives



Oils and Fats

- Milk & Alternatives
- Meat & Alternatives
- **Oils & Fats**
- Beverages
- Advice for different ages and stages

Using the Food Guide
Maintaining Healthy
Habits

Take the Guided Tour



Get Your Copy

Oils and Fats - Content

- The introduction page did not always clearly describe the information and resources that one would find in the Oils and Fats section.
 - Most Toronto respondents were unclear as to the content that was available in the Oils and Fats section, while most Montreal respondents could clearly explain content expectations based on the introduction page. Some Toronto participants were more likely to skim the information in the introduction rather than read all the text.
- Content expectations upon reading the introduction page included (in order of mention):
 - Types of oils to use for cooking
 - List of foods to avoid that are high in fat
 - Different types of fats and their definitions (i.e. saturated versus unsaturated, trans fats)
 - Percentage of daily recommended fat intake/How much to consume every day
 - Good versus bad types of fat
 - Benefits of low fat foods
 - Brand recommendations for oils
 - Recipes made with low fat foods



Oils & Fats

There are different types of fats: **saturated**, **unsaturated** and **trans** fats. Choosing the right amount and types of oils and fats can lower your risk of developing certain diseases such as heart disease. For good health, include a small amount of unsaturated fat and reduce the amount of saturated and trans fat in your day.

You can do this by:

- Choosing lower fat foods within the four food groups
 - vegetables and fruit tips
 - grain products tips
 - milk and alternatives tips
 - meat and alternatives tips
- Limiting foods and beverages high in saturated and/or trans fat
 - maintaining healthy habits**
- Including a small amount of unsaturated fat to obtain essential fats that our bodies cannot produce.



Topics

Food Guide Basics

Choosing Foods

- Vegetables & Fruit
- Grain Products
- Milk & Alternatives
- Meat & Alternatives
- Oils & Fats
 - What type and amount of fat do I need?
 - Tips**
- Beverages
- Advice for different ages and stages

Using the Food Guide Maintaining Healthy Habits

Take the Guided Tour



Some respondents expected to find a list of foods with high fat content within the 'Tips' section.

about the type and amount of oils and fats to include in your day

Navigation to the Plan Meals Section

- From the homepage, half of the respondents had difficulty finding information on planning meals.
- While half of the respondents correctly selected 'Using the Food Guide', it is important to note that some of these respondents had previously completed the exercise of finding information on planning meals.
- Among the respondents who were unsuccessful in finding information on planning meals, a few selected 'Maintaining Healthy Habits' and 'Choosing Foods', while one respondent selected 'Food Guide Basics'.



Plan Meals – Make a Plan - Content

- Most respondents found the information in the 'Make a Plan' section to be useful, given that it provided food ideas and recommended servings. A few respondents indicated that it would help them save time when planning and preparing meals.
- All respondents liked the examples of meals provided for different family scenarios.
 - Respondents showed more interest when they saw a scenario that related specifically to their situation.

Examples of Meals for Different Families

You can use Canada's Food Guide to plan a day's worth of eating for the whole family that satisfies everyone's food group needs. The following examples use the same basic meals for each family but served in different amounts. These meals can be eaten at home, at work, at school or elsewhere.

Family of 2 adults and 2 children

Single dad with 2 teenagers

Single mom with 1 children and help from grandmother

Respondents expected a wider variety of meal examples than what is currently provided (e.g. Single mom with 1 child and family of 2 adults and 1 child).

Plan Meals – Examples of Meals

- Most respondents indicated that they would use this information primarily as a guideline for meals, by attempting to incorporate the ideas into their diets.
 - Many respondents liked the recommended servings information for different age groups. However, it was noted that it was unnecessary to indicate this information twice.
 - Some respondents indicated that this information would be particularly interesting and useful for their children.
 - A few mothers indicated that these meal examples would be very useful for working moms who have very little time to prepare meals.

Family of 2 adults and 2 children

The Wong family includes mom and dad and two children Sophie age 3 and Colin age 5. The children don't need as many Food Guide Servings from the Vegetables and Fruit and Grain Products groups as their parents. Mom and dad have to fit more of these foods into their day. The whole family takes a bag lunch and packs along their snacks. Here's how one day of eating might look like.

	Sophie age 3	Colin age 5	Mom age 33	Dad age 35
Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per day.				
Vegetables and fruit	4	5	7 to 8	8 to 9
Grain Products	3	4	6 to 7	8
Milk & Alternatives	2	2	2	2
Meat and Alternatives	1	1	2	3
Meals				
Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per day	4 Vegetables and Fruit 3 Grain Products 2 Milk and Alternatives 1 Meat and Alternatives	5 Vegetables and Fruit 4 Grain Products 2 Milk and Alternatives 1 Meat and Alternatives	7 to 8 Vegetables and Fruit 6 to 7 Grain Products 2 Milk and Alternatives 2 Meat and Alternatives	8 to 10 Vegetables and Fruit 8 Grain Products 2 Milk and Alternatives 3 Meat and Alternatives
Breakfast	Smoothie made with 60 ml (1/4 cup) frozen berries and 125 mL (1/2 cup) 2% milk 15 g whole grain	Smoothie made with 60 ml (1/4 cup) frozen berries and 125 mL (1/2 cup) 2% milk 30 g whole grain	Smoothie made with 125 ml (1/2 cup) frozen berries and 250 mL 1 cup) 2% milk 1 slices whole	Smoothie made with 125 ml (1/2 cup) frozen berries and 250 mL 1 cup) 2% milk 2 slices whole

As the table was somewhat “overwhelming” and “busy” at first glance, some respondents noted that it was unnecessary to include information on recommended servings twice on this page.

Plan Meals – Make a Plan: Usability Issues

- Upon navigating through the Plan Meals section and the Make a Plan page, some usability issues emerged:
 - Some respondents expected to be able to click on all text that was highlighted in blue. However, the text highlighted and underlined in blue was not clickable, while the text highlighted in blue, yet not underlined was clickable.

The screenshot displays the 'Canada's Food Guide' website. At the top, there's a header with the logo and a rainbow graphic. Below it, a section titled 'Make a plan' contains a paragraph about meal planning. A black oval highlights the phrase 'examples of meals for different families' in the text. To the right, a sidebar lists 'Topics' including 'Food Guide Basics', 'Choosing Foods', and 'Using the Food Guide'. Below the sidebar, there's a 'Take the Guided Tour' button and a 'Get Your Copy' button. Further down, a section titled 'Planning with your family in mind' contains two sub-sections: 'What types of foods?' and 'How much food?'. In the 'What types of foods?' section, a black oval highlights the phrase 'make each Food Guide Serving count'. In the 'How much food?' section, a black oval highlights the phrase 'recommended number of Food Guide Servings'. At the bottom, there are two boxes: 'It's okay to have more or less than one Food Guide Serving' and 'You can spread your Food Guide Servings for Meat and Alternatives throughout the day'.

Canada's Food Guide

Make a plan

Your family may be small – just you – or may include children and other adults. It may seem difficult to plan, shop and prepare meals and snacks that satisfy everyone's needs. You can use the tips in Canada's Food Guide to help you make healthy choices. Check out the examples of meals for different families

Topics

- Food Guide Basics
- Choosing Foods
- Using the Food Guide
 - Plan Meals
 - Make a Plan
 - Tips
 - Shopping Tips
 - Food Labels
 - Fast and Easy Meals
 - Snacks that Count
 - Eating Out
 - Count Food Guide Servings in a meal

Maintaining Healthy Habits

[Take the Guided Tour](#)

[Get Your Copy](#)

Planning with your family in mind

What types of foods?

The type of food your family needs are basically the same for everyone and should be based on the tips found in Canada's Food Guide. With the large variety of foods in the four food groups it is easy to plan meals everyone will enjoy.

Learn more how to make each Food Guide Serving count

How much food?

The amount of food you serve varies for different family members. For example, preschooler's need fewer Food Guide Servings from some food groups than older children and teens. What's important is knowing that you have consumed your recommended number of Food Guide Servings from each of the four food groups by the end of the day.

Learn more about what counts as one Food Guide Serving

It's okay to have more or less than one Food Guide Serving

You may serve yourself around the same amount as one Food Guide Serving while other family members may want more or less than one Food Guide Serving.

For example:

You can spread your Food Guide Servings for Meat and Alternatives throughout the day.

For example:

- You could have 25 g (about 1 oz) of meat in a salad at lunch and 50 g (about 2 oz) of meat or poultry at supper. That adds up to

My Food Guide

Expectations for My Food Guide

- While most respondents did not realize that the text below the 'My Food Guide' icon on the homepage accompanied the icon, they did mention that the text helped clarify the purpose of the icon. Many respondents indicated that the icon on its own was not clear enough.
 - Some respondents expected a copy of the Food Guide based solely on the 'My Food Guide' icon
- Based on the homepage link and the associated text, respondents expected the tool to produce a meal plan, guide or calendar that would take into account their age, gender and food choices.
 - Respondents expected to select foods from each food group
 - One respondent expected "a food diary"
 - One respondent expected a calculator to calculate specific food nutrients
- Some respondents expected that the tool would evaluate or rate the healthiness of their current diet
 - What am I getting from my food (i.e. nutrients)
 - One respondent expected the tool to provide information on what foods he should eat and what activities he should be doing based on the information entered into the tool
- It was not clear to all respondents that a print out would be the end result.
 - A few respondents thought the image looked like a calendar on the 'My Food Guide' icon, expecting "a daily meal calendar" as a final product.



My Food Guide - Introduction Page

Based on the introductory text, the majority of respondents readily understood that they would be getting a print out from the tool, but it was not entirely clear what the page would show.

My Food Guide

Create "My Food Guide" by selecting your food and activity choices.

First, enter your age and sex to find out how much food you need everyday;

Second, choose examples of foods from the four food groups; and

Third, choose examples of physical activities you like to do.

Once you have completed the activity you will have a one page custom made "My Food Guide". Print it and put it on your fridge or bring it with you when you go grocery shopping.

Habits

Take the Guided Tour

Get Your Copy



It was not clear to all that the image showed a sample output page.

Various items on the page often went unnoticed.

My Food Guide and Canada's Food Guide are best used together!

Start building My Food Guide!

Instructions

This activity will open in a new window and will take you only about 7 minutes.

You will be able to view your custom made page in HTML and in PDF formats. The PDF version has been designed for printing. For information on accessing Adobe Acrobat Reader, consult our alternate format help.

Help us promote My Food Guide!

Download our banners, promotional texts and links.

Not all respondents knew how to start using the tool. The link did not look clickable to a couple of respondents. Many respondents noted that the 'Start building My Food Guide' link did not stand out enough on the page.

Several respondents began the tool, without reading the instructions in the box below the start link.

My Food Guide - Steps 1 to 3

- Most respondents could easily complete step 1, by selecting their sex and age
 - A couple of respondents commented that the age groups were too broad (i.e. male aged 31 to 50).
 - One respondent did not notice the 'next' button and tried to click enter to proceed to the next step.
 - One respondent reported that the tool should ask for the user's weight, which should be taken into account when developing meals and suggesting activities.
- It was clear to all respondents that steps 2 and 3 offered information only, with no input required.
 - Most respondents were quick to move on to Step 4.

Step 1

My Food Guide

The number of Food Guide Servings you need every day from each food group depends on your age and sex.

Start by entering the following information:

☒ Female ☐ Male

31-50 years

Next

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

About You About You Examples of Foods Vegetables & Fruit Grain Products Milk & Alternatives Meat & Alternatives Physical Activity You are Done!

Step 2

My Food Guide

As a woman aged 31 to 50 years old, this is how many Food Guide Servings you need from each food group every day.

Vegetables and Fruit	7
Grain Products	6
Milk and Alternatives	2
Meat and Alternatives	2

Back Next

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

About You About You Examples of Foods Vegetables & Fruit Grain Products Milk & Alternatives Meat & Alternatives Physical Activity You are Done!

Step 3

My Food Guide

There are lots of foods to choose from in each food group. It is important to include the right types of foods in your day.

Next you will choose up to 6 examples of foods from each of the four food groups.

Back Next

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

About You About You Examples of Foods Vegetables & Fruit Grain Products Milk & Alternatives Meat & Alternatives Physical Activity You are Done!

My Food Guide – Usability Issues with the Food Selection Process

My Food Guide – Food Selection Process (1)



There are lots of foods to choose from in each food group. It is important to include the right types of foods in your day.

Next you will choose up to 6 examples of foods from each of the four food groups.



Back

Next



One respondent in Toronto and a couple in Montreal questioned whether they were supposed to select items they liked or items they felt they were supposed to eat. Some respondents indicated that the instructions were not specific enough.

My Food Guide – Food Selection Process (2)



Choose up to 6 examples of **Vegetables and Fruit**

Canada's Food Guide recommends:

- Eating at least one **dark green** and one **orange** vegetable each day.
- Enjoying vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.

Dark Green and Orange Vegetables

- A
- ☐  **Asparagus**
(125 mL, 1/2 cup, 6 spears)
- B
- ☐  **Beans, green**
(125 mL, 1/2 cup)
- ☐  **Bok choy/Chinese cabbage (Choi sum)**
(125 mL, 1/2 cup cooked)
- ☐  **Broccoli**
(125 mL, 1/2 cup)
- ☐  **Brussels sprouts**
(125 mL, 1/2 cup, 4 sprouts)
- C
- ☐  **Carrots**

More Vegetables and Fruit

- A
- ☐  **Apple**
(1 medium)
- ☐  **Apricot, fresh ***
(3 medium)
- ☐  **Avocado**
(1/2 medium)
- B
- ☐  **Bamboo shoots**
(125 mL, 1/2 cup)
- ☐  **Banana**
(1 medium)
- ☐  **Beans, yellow**
(125 mL, 1/2 cup)
- ☐  **Beets**

Many respondents initially thought that the text in the highlighted box was the instruction for selecting food items.

Most respondents read the instructions in the highlighted box upon arriving on this page. Upon reading the text, many assumed that they had to select one green and one orange vegetable.

Many respondents did not even notice the instruction at the top of the page, as they were often drawn to the information in the box. To some respondents this looked like a title.

My Food Guide – Food Selection Process (3)



Choose up to 6 examples of **Vegetables and Fruit**

Canada's Food Guide recommends:

- Eating at least one **dark green** and one **orange** vegetable each day.
- Enjoying vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.

One respondent reported that the columns were too long and suggested including expandable categories for fruit and vegetables.

Dark Green and Orange Vegetables	More Vegetables and Fruit
A ☐ Asparagus (125 mL, 1/2 cup, 6 spears)	A ☐ Apple (1 medium)
B ☐ Beans, green (125 mL, 1/2 cup)	☐ Apricot, fresh * (3 medium)
☐ Bok choy/Chinese cabbage (Choi sum) (125 mL, 1/2 cup cooked)	☐ Avocado (1/2 medium)
☐ Broccoli (125 mL, 1/2 cup)	B ☐ Bamboo shoots (125 mL, 1/2 cup)
☐ Brussels sprouts (125 mL, 1/2 cup, 4 sprouts)	☐ Banana (1 medium)
C ☐ Carrots	☐ Beans, yellow (125 mL, 1/2 cup)
	☐ Beets

Respondents appreciated the images shown next to the food names. Images were thought to add interest, to facilitate food selection and to make it easier to recognize less familiar foods.

Some respondents thought that they had to select 6 food items from each column.

My Food Guide – Food Selection Process (4)

- Most respondents who read the instruction **to select up to 6 vegetables and fruit** simply glanced at the instruction and retained the number 6. Many indicated that they saw the number 6 and immediately assumed that they had to select 6 items.
- The counter feature at the bottom of each selection page also gave respondents the impression that they had to select 6 items. For instance, if they selected 6 items, they would be instructed to continue, whereas if they selected less than 6 items, there was no indication to continue. Upon selecting more than 6 items, the tool clearly indicated that they could not proceed without removing items from their list.
 - Respondents reported that the counter would be more effective if it kept track of the number of items as the user was making selections. As currently presented, users do not see the counter unless they scroll down to the bottom of the page.
 - A couple respondents did not understand why she was asked to unselect items. This respondent felt that tool did not clearly explain the reason for unselecting items.

Choose up to 6 examples of **Vegetables and Fruit**

Canada's Food Guide recommends:

- Eating at least one **dark green** and one **orange** vegetable each day.
- Enjoying vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.

You've picked **4** examples!

Next >

You've picked **6** examples!
[Click next to continue...](#)

Next >

You've picked **8** examples!

[You've picked too many examples! You must unselect 2 examples to continue.](#)

< Back

Next >

My Food Guide – Food Selection Process (5)

A couple of respondents reported that the asterisk related to substituting orange fruit for an orange vegetable would be more useful if it was included at the top of the page, before beginning their food selection.

Some orange coloured fruit can be substituted for an orange vegetable. See the fruit marked with an asterisks ()*

- L**
 - ☐  **Lettuce, iceberg or butterhead**
(250 mL, 1 cup)
 - ☐  **Lychee**
(125 mL, 1/2 cup)
- M**
 - ☐  **Mango ***
(125 mL, 1/2 cup, 1/2 medium)
 - ☐  **Mixed Vegetables**
(125 mL, 1/2 cup)
 - ☐  **Mushrooms**
(125 mL, 1/2 cup)
- N**
 - ☐  **Nectarine ***
(1 medium)

A couple of respondents questioned why the asterisk note appeared under the vegetable column when it pertained to the fruit column.

None of the respondents noticed the asterisks used for certain fruit items. The note for these items was the only indicator.

Respondents typically did not notice the steps bar at the bottom of each page. Only a couple of respondents made unprompted comments related to the utility of the bar.



My Food Guide – Food Selection Process (6)

Some respondents did not notice the difference between both columns within the Grain products selection page, primarily with respect to cold and hot cereal selection. Respondents had a tendency to glance quickly through the items and, therefore, did not notice the difference between whole grain and non whole grain.

Whole Grain	Non Whole Grain
B	B
☐  Bagel, whole grain (1/2 bagel, 45 g)	☐  Baguette, French (1 slice, 35 g)
☐  Barley (125 mL, 1/2 cup)	☐  Bannock (1 medium, 35 g)
☐  Bread, pumpernickel or rye (1 slice, 35 g)	☐  Bread, white (1 slice, 35 g)
☐  Bread, whole grain (1 slice, 35 g)	C
☐  Bulgur (125 mL, 1/2 cup)	☐  Cereal, cold (30 g)
C	☐  Cereal, hot (150 g)
☐  Cereal, cold, whole grain (30 g)	☐  Congee (125 mL, 1/2 cup)
☐  Cereal, hot, whole grain (150 g, 175 mL, 3/4 cup)	☐  Cornbread (1 slice, 35 g)

My Food Guide – Food Selection Process (7)

Though the other food groups were considered to offer an adequate number of choices, many respondents had difficulty selecting six items from the list of milk and alternatives.

Milk	Milk Alternatives
M	B
☐  Milk, chocolate (250 mL, 1 cup)	☐  Buttermilk (250 mL, 1 cup)
☐  Milk, evaporated, canned (125 mL, 1/2 cup undiluted)	C
☐  Milk, goat (250 mL, 1 cup)	☐  Cheese, block (cheddar, Mozzarella, Swiss, feta) (50 g, 1 1/2 oz)
☐  Milk, lactose-free (250 mL, 1 cup)	☐  Cheese, cottage or quark (500 mL, 2 cups)
☐  Milk, powdered (250 mL, 1 cup diluted)	☐  Cheese, goat (50 g, 1 1/2 oz)
☐  Milk, powdered (25 g, 1 oz)	F
☐  Milk, skim, 1%, 2% (250 mL, 1 cup)	☐  Fortified soy beverage (250 mL, 1 cup)
	P
	☐  Paneer (50 g, 1 1/2 oz)
	☐  Pudding/custard (125 mL, 1/2 cup)
	Y
	☐  Yogurt (plain and flavoured) (175 g, 3/4 cup)
	☐  Yogurt drinks (200 mL, 3/4 cup)

It was not clear to all respondents that the items were organized alphabetically.

My Food Guide - Accessing the Final Product

All respondents were clear about how to view the final product.

Depending on the respondent, both the link and the image were used to access the final product.

Congratulations – you are done!



[View My Food Guide to print or save - PDF version](#)

The foods that appear on your custom made My Food Guide are examples only. After you have printed out your copy, you can try it again with different foods or for different family members!



My Food Guide and Canada's Food Guide are best used together.

My Food Guide - Final Product (1)



Health Canada
Santé Canada

Your health and
safety... our priority.

Votre santé et votre
sécurité... notre priorité.

My Food Guide

Name: _____

My Recommended Food Guide Servings per day

My Numbers

Woman aged 31 to 50

My Examples

Vegetables and Fruit

7

Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
Enjoy vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.

Grain Products

6

Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.
Avoid grain products that are high in fat, sugar or salt.

Milk and Alternatives

2

Drink lower fat milk or fortified soy beverages each day.*
Make your milk products and alternatives choices lower fat.

Meat and Alternatives

2

Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.
Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of Fish each week.*
Select meat, fish, seafood and poultry prepared with little or no added fat or salt.



Beans
125 mL, 1/2 cup



Lettuce
250 mL, 1 cup



Peas
125 mL, 1/2 cup



Apple
1 medium



Avocado
1/2 medium



Banana
1 medium



Bagel
1/2 bagel, 45 g



Bread
1 slice, 35 g



English muffin
1/2 muffin, 30 g



Pancake
1 medium, 75 g



Pasta/noodles
125 mL, 1/2 cup



Rice
125 mL, 1/2 cup



Milk
250 mL, 1 cup



Milk
250 mL, 1 cup



Cheese
50 g, 1 1/2 oz



Cheese
50 g, 1 1/2 oz



Yogurt
175 g, 3/4 cup



Yogurt drinks
200 mL, 3/4 cup



Hummus
175 mL, 3/4 cup



Nuts
80 mL, 1/4 cup



Beef
75 g, 2 1/2 oz



Chicken
75 g, 2 1/2 oz



Fish and
75 g, 2 1/2 oz



Pork
75 g, 2 1/2 oz

Build **30 to 60 minutes** of physical activity
into your day everyday



Here are the examples you chose:

- Aerobics
- Running

- Cycling
- Skating, ice, in line

- Garden and Yard work
- Weight/Strength Training routines

My Food Guide - Final Product (2)

- Respondents praised the look of the page, in particular the use of colour.
- Most respondents indicated that they would go through the exercise again and use the final print out.
 - Respondents would use the print out as a guide to healthy eating by trying to incorporate the selected items into their daily menus.
 - Most would print the document and post it on their fridge.
 - A few reported that they would take the document with them when grocery shopping.
 - Many would complete the exercise for their children. For those children who were old enough, respondents would go through the activity with their child.
 - A few respondents indicated that while the tool would not be useful for them personally, given the basic nature of the tool and the lack of useful information such as meal plans, they would definitely use the tool for their children.
 - Respondents found the inclusion of physical activity to be useful and important.
- In place of, or in addition to this page, respondents described that they would appreciate:
 - Calorie intake, protein intake
 - Allow the tool to fill out their name
 - An evaluation of their current diet/ the food choices made, ideally including tips for improvement
 - A recommended meal plan that includes their choices

My Food Guide - Final Product (3)

- Some respondents in Montreal associated the servings listed in the left column with the examples provided in the right column.
 - A couple of respondents did not understand why they had to select 6 meat and dairy items when they only needed to eat 2 servings.
 - Some respondents assumed that by eating all 6 fruit and vegetables listed in the example section, that this would cover their required portions even when the recommended portions were more than 6.
- Some respondents reported that the key piece of information in the print out was the number of servings, and not the examples.
- Some respondents wanted to be able to pick more examples of fruit and vegetables.

My Numbers Woman aged 31 to 50	My Examples
Vegetables and Fruit 7 Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day. Enjoy vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.	 Beans 125 mL, 1/2 cup  Lettuce 250 mL, 1 cup  Peas 125 mL, 1/2 cup  Apple 1 medium  Avocado 1/2 medium  Banana 1 medium
Grain Products 6 Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day. Avoid grain products that are high in fat, sugar or salt.	 Bagel 1/2 bagel, 45 g  Bread 1 slice, 35 g  English muffin 1/2 muffin, 30 g  Pancake 1 medium, 75 g  Pasta/noodles 125 mL, 1/2 cup  Rice 125 mL, 1/2 cup
Milk and Alternatives 2 Drink lower fat milk or fortified soy beverages each day.* Make your milk products and alternatives choices lower fat.	 Milk 250 mL, 1 cup  Milk 250 mL, 1 cup  Cheese 50 g, 1 1/2 oz  Cheese 50 g, 1 1/2 oz  Yogurt 175 g, 3/4 cup  Yogurt drinks 200 mL, 3/4 cup
Meat and Alternatives 2 Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often. Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of Fish each week.* Select meat, fish, seafood and poultry prepared with little or no added fat or salt.	 Hummus 175 mL, 3/4 cup  Nuts 60 mL, 1/4 cup  Beef 75 g, 2 1/2 oz  Chicken 75 g, 2 1/2 oz  Fish and 75 g, 2 1/2 oz  Pork 75 g, 2 1/2 oz

My Food Guide - Final Product (4)

- One Toronto respondent and three Montreal respondents were somewhat confused with the left column. The following questions were raised :
 - What do the numbers represent?
 - What time frame is covered? (i.e. number of choices per day, per week, per meal?)
 - How to choose 7 vegetables and fruits when only 6 are shown?
 - What does 'Number' refer to?
- After reviewing all steps, one respondent proposed that the explanation offered at Step 2 would be better placed in the final product to improve the understanding of the left column.

My Numbers	
Woman aged 31 to 50	
Vegetables and Fruit	7
Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day. Enjoy vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.	
Grain Products	6
Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day. Avoid grain products that are high in fat, sugar or salt.	
Milk and Alternatives	2
Drink lower fat milk or fortified soy beverages each day. * Make your milk products and alternatives choices lower fat.	
Meat and Alternatives	2
Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often. Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of Fish each week. * Select meat, fish, seafood and poultry prepared with little or no added fat or salt.	

As a woman aged 31 to 50 years old, this is how many Food Guide Servings you need from each food group every day.

Vegetables and Fruit	7
Grain Products	6
Milk and Alternatives	2
Meat and Alternatives	2

My Food Guide - Final Product (5)

- Respondents raised the following questions about the right column of the page:
 - What do the food selections represent?
 - Does each one represent a portion?
 - One respondent suggested changing the title to “My selected food examples”.

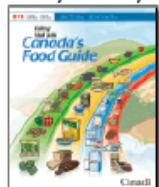
My Examples

 Beans 125 mL, 1/2 cup	 Lettuce 250 mL, 1 cup	 Peas 125 mL, 1/2 cup	 Apple 1 medium	 Avocado 1/2 medium	 Banana 1 medium
 Bagel 1/2 bagel, 45 g	 Bread 1 slice, 35 g	 English muffin 1/2 muffin, 30 g	 Pancake 1 medium, 75 g	 Pasta/noodles 125 mL, 1/2 cup	 Rice 125 mL, 1/2 cup
 Milk 250 mL, 1 cup	 Milk 250 mL, 1 cup	 Cheese 50 g, 1 1/2 oz	 Cheese 50 g, 1 1/2 oz	 Yogurt 175 g, 3/4 cup	 Yogurt drinks 200 mL, 3/4 cup
 Hummus 175 mL, 3/4 cup	 Nuts 60 mL, 1/4 cup	 Beef 75 g, 2 1/2 oz	 Chicken 75 g, 2 1/2 oz	 Fish and 75 g, 2 1/2 oz	 Pork 75 g, 2 1/2 oz

My Food Guide - Final Product (6)

- Most respondents appreciated the fact that information on physical activity was included on the final print out.
 - This acted as a reminder to many that a balanced lifestyle is important and that physical activity is just as important as healthy eating.
 - A few respondents expected the tool to offer suggestions on different physical activities to try based on what they selected.
- Some respondents felt that the images of physical activity used should match the physical activities selected by the user, as opposed to including generic images.

Build **30 to 60 minutes** of physical activity into your day everyday



Use with
Canada's
Food Guide

Here are the examples you chose:

- Aerobics
- Running

- Cycling
- Skating, ice, in line

- Garden and Yard work
- Weight/Strength Training routines



www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Canada

Recommendations

Recommendations – Canada's Food Guide Homepage (1)

Navigation

- To ensure that visitors know what to expect from each of the main menu headings (i.e. Food Guide Basics, Choosing Foods, Using the Food Guide and Maintaining Healthy Habits), consider strategies such as adding a mouse-over (provided this approach is permissible under the accessibility guidelines), a drop-down sub menu for each main menu heading on the homepage or by adding a brief description under each heading. This will ensure that users can easily navigate to content on the website.
- Change the images used for the 'Food Guide Basics' and the 'Using the Food Guide' links as the current images do not clearly define the content within each section, as do the images used for 'Choosing Foods' and 'Maintaining Healthy Habits'.



Recommendations – Canada's Food Guide Homepage (2)

Labeling

- Clarify the following labels:
 - My Food Guide: Consider changing the label to “My Personal Food Guide”.
 - Get Your Copy: Consider changing the label to “Get Your Copy of the Food Guide” or “Print Your Copy of the Food Guide”.
 - Take the Guided Tour: Consider clarifying this label to reflect the nature of the guided tour.

Look and Feel

- Redesign the ‘My Food Guide’ link on the homepage to clearly incorporate the text into the design. In its current format, most respondents did not realize that the text and the icon went together, causing some unmet expectations. Respondents reported that the icon itself was not clear, yet the text helped clarify its purpose.



Navigation

- Modify the right-menu box to clearly illustrate the availability of the four main menu options (i.e. Food Guide Basics, Choosing Foods, Using the Food Guide and Maintaining Healthy Habits). Incorporating the images used on the homepage might help users associate these categories with the four main categories on the homepage. This will allow users to easily toggle between the four main sections without having to return to the homepage.
- Incorporate a home button within content pages so that users can easily return to the homepage from within content pages.

Recommendations - Canada Food's Guide Content Pages (2)

Navigation (continued)

- For those users who rely heavily on the left navigation menu as opposed to the right navigation menu, incorporate all right-menu items as links in the middle of each content page, such as organized within the 'Choosing Foods' section. This will ensure that respondents do not miss important content on the website.



Recommendations – Canada's Food Guide Content Pages (3)

Oils and Fats

- Simplify the text on the introduction page to clearly outline the information and resources that are included in this section.
- Offer examples of high fat foods within the 'Tips' section as many respondents expected to find this information in the Oils and Fats section.
 - The list of foods high in fat that are currently included in the 'Maintaining Healthy Habits' section under 'Achieve and Maintain Your Healthy Weight' could be moved to the Oils and Fats section to accommodate users content expectations for this section. Upon attempting to find this information during the exercises, most respondents selected 'Choosing Foods', while no one selected 'Maintaining Healthy Habits'.

Examples of foods and beverages that are often high in calories, fat, sugar or salt (sodium):

- cakes and pastries
- cookies and granola bars
- ice cream and frozen desserts
- chocolate and candies
- muffins and doughnuts
- dried and canned soups
- french fries
- nachos
- potato chips
- alcohol
- fruit flavoured drinks
- soft drinks
- sports and energy drinks
- sweetened hot or cold drinks



Ideas for healthy alternatives to foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt

Instead of...

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Cakes and pastries</i> | → try fruit with yogurt, a baked apple with cinnamon or graham crackers to satisfy your sweet tooth. |
| <i>Cookies and granola bars</i> | → try plain pop corn with a sprinkling of herbs |
| <i>Ice cream and frozen desserts</i> | → try freezing yogurt in a popsicle tray |
| <i>Muffins and doughnuts</i> | → try making your own high fibre, low fat muffins or bagels |
| <i>Dried and canned soups</i> | → use leftovers to make your own soup at home. Have a soup swap with your friends, neighbors or co-workers and freeze for later use. |



Recommendations – Canada's Food Guide Content Pages (4)

Plan Meals – Make a Plan

- Incorporate more examples of meals to cover a wider range of family scenarios (e.g. single mom with 1 child, family of 2 adults with 1 child, vegetarian family etc.). Respondents were more interested in exploring these meal examples when they were able to select a scenario that reflected their current family composition.
- Move the 'examples of meals for different families' section to the top of the 'Make a Plan' page, just under the 'check out the examples of meals for different families' sentence. This will help fill in the white space that currently exists on the page. This white space left some respondents believing that there was no further content on that page.

Make a plan

Your family may be small – just you – or may include children and other adults. It may seem difficult to plan, shop and prepare meals and snacks that satisfy everyone's needs. You can use the tips in Canada's Food Guide to help you make healthy choices. Check out the [examples of meals for different families](#)

Examples of Meals for Different Families

You can use Canada's Food Guide to plan a day's worth of eating for the whole family that satisfies everyone's food group needs. The following examples use the same basic meals for each family but served in different amounts. These meals can be eaten at home, at work, at school or elsewhere.

[Family of 2 adults and 2 children](#)

[Single dad with 2 teenagers](#)

[Single mom with 1 children and help from grandmother](#)

Recommendations – Canada's Food Guide Content Pages (5)

Examples of Meals for Different Families

- Remove the duplicate servings per day information from the meal table. This will help alleviate users perception that the table is overwhelming and it will also reduce the amount of scrolling required to view the table.

	Sophie age 3	Colin age 5	Mom age 33	Dad age 35
Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per day.				
Vegetables and fruit	4	5	7 to 8	8 to 9
Grain Products	3	4	6 to 7	8
Milk & Alternatives	2	2	2	2
Meat and Alternatives	1	1	2	3
Meals				
Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per day	4 Vegetables and Fruit 3 Grain Products 2 Milk and Alternatives 1 Meat and Alternatives	5 Vegetables and Fruit 4 Grain Products 2 Milk and Alternatives 1 Meat and Alternatives	7 to 8 Vegetables and Fruit 6 to 7 Grain Products 2 Milk and Alternatives 2 Meat and Alternatives	8 to 10 Vegetables and Fruit 8 Grain Products 2 Milk and Alternatives 3 Meat and Alternatives

Recommendations - My Food Guide (1)

Navigation

- Redesign the start link on the introduction page for the My Food Guide interactive tool to look more like a clickable button.

My Food Guide

Create "My Food Guide" by selecting your food and activity choices.

First, enter your age and sex to find out how much food you need everyday;

Second, choose examples of foods from the four food groups; and

Third, choose examples of physical activities you like to do.

Once you have completed the activity you will have a one page custom made "My Food Guide". Print it and put it on your fridge or bring it with you when you go grocery shopping.

Habits

Take the Guided Tour

Get Your Copy



My Food Guide and Canada's Food Guide are best used together!

Start building My Food Guide!

Instructions

- Clarify the upfront instructions on Step 3 to instruct users to select food items that they like from the items provided within each food group. Some respondents were unclear as to how to make their selections.

Recommendations - My Food Guide (2)

Food Selection Process

- Move the instruction at the top of each food selection page (i.e. Choose up to 6 examples of...) below the box that incorporated Canada's Food Guide recommendations. Users had a tendency to go directly to the box and therefore missed any content above the box. Respondents also read the content within the highlighted box and took this information as instructions to the food selection process.
- Change the instruction to read "Choose a **maximum of 6** examples of..." or "Choose **6 examples or less** of..." as most respondents assumed that they had to select 6 items.
- Clarify the messages when more/fewer than six food choices are made for any food group.
 - Based on the current message provided, respondents were not clear on whether or not they could proceed when selecting fewer than 6 items. The current message (i.e. You've picked 4 examples!) does not direct the user to continue. Consider changing the message to read: "You've picked 4 examples! Click next to continue... Next".
 - Based on the current message provided when respondents selected more than 6 items, respondents were not always clear as to why they were being asked to unselect items. Consider changing the message to read: "You've picked too many examples! You are only allowed to pick a maximum of 6 items! You must unselect 2 items to continue... Next".
- Include any asterisk messages (i.e. in the Fruit and Vegetables selection page) in the highlighted box at the top of the food selection page. This will allow users to read the message before making any selections. Also consider increasing the size of the asterisk placed beside certain foods as none of our respondents took note of these specific items.

Recommendations - My Food Guide – Final Product

- On the final product, adjust the heading of the left column to clarify the meaning of the term “number” as the current heading was reported as not descriptive enough. Consider changing the heading to “My recommended food guide servings per day”, as opposed to ‘My Numbers’. Remove this text from under the My Food Guide main heading on the print out.
- On the final product, adjust the heading of the right column to clarify the meaning of the term “example” as the current heading was reported as not descriptive enough. Consider changing the heading to “My selected food examples”, as opposed to ‘My Examples’. It would also be important to highlight that the portions provided for the listed food examples represent one serving.
- A short text could also be included within the print out to explain how to use the information provided, more specifically the information provided in the right and the left columns.
- Incorporate the users first name into the print out, so that the user does not have to pencil it in. By including the first name only, users will be less concerned with security and confidentiality issues.

Appendix

- Detailed Respondent Profiles
- Respondent Suggestions for Priority Changes

Detailed Respondent Profile – Toronto

Gender	Age	Occupation	Number and ages of children at home	Frequency of Internet use	Family's level of health	Ethnic Origin
F	25-34	Homemaker	1 child 4 years old	At least once a week	Very healthy	South Asian
F	35-44	Administrative Support	2 children 4 and 7 years old	At least once a week	Very healthy	Canadian
M	25-34	School Vice-Principal	1 child 12 years old	At least once a week	Somewhat healthy	Canadian
M	18-24	Teacher	1 child 4 years old	A few times a month	Not at all healthy	African
F	18-24	Student	1 child 2.5 years old	A few times a month	Not very healthy	Canadian
F	35-44	Administrative Support	1 child 12 years old	At least once a week	Somewhat healthy	Caribbean
F	35-44	Homemaker	2 children 4 and 9 years old	At least once a week	Somewhat healthy	Caribbean

Detailed Respondent Profile - Montreal

Gender	Age	Occupation	Number and ages of children at home	Frequency of Internet use	Family's level of health	Ethnic Origin
F	31	Student	2 children 6 years, 10 years	At least once per week	Not very healthy	Chilean
M	23	Student	1 child 2 years	At least once per week	Not very healthy	Canadian
M	23	Maintenance Worker	1 child 7 years	Once per month or less often	Not healthy at all	Canadian
F	36	Secretary	2 children 11 and 18 years	At least once per week	Very healthy	European
F	25	Student	1 child 2 years	At least once per week	Very healthy	Haitian
F	37	Social Worker	2 children 7 months and 5 years	At least once per week	Somewhat healthy	Haitian
F	33	Housewife	2 children 1 and 4 years	A few times per month	Somewhat healthy	Canadian

Respondent Suggestions for Priority Changes – Homepage

- At the end of each interview, respondents were asked to name up to five changes or improvements to Canada's Food Guide website and the My Food Guide interactive tool which they considered to be most urgently needed. These changes are summarized below, for the home page.
 - Clarify or change the image used for the Using the Food Guide link and the Food Guide Basics link
 - Include a mouse-over effect highlighting the sub sections within the four main sections (i.e. Food Guide basics, Choosing Foods, Using the Food Guide and Maintaining Healthy Habits)
 - Use real images of food, as opposed to the cartoon images
 - Make the My Food Guide icon stand out more and better incorporate the current text as it currently looks like the icon and the text are separate
 - Clarify the following labels: My Food Guide, Get Your Copy and Take the Guided Tour
 - Include a physical activity link on the homepage
 - Content/Feature suggestions included:
 - International menus
 - Vegetarian menus
 - Recipe section that changes on a regular basis to attract repeat visitors or links to recipe sites
 - Interactive games for children

Respondent Suggestions for Priority Changes – Content Pages

- At the end of each interview, respondents were asked to name up to five changes or improvements to Canada's Food Guide website and the My Food Guide interactive tool which they considered to be most urgently needed. These changes are summarized below, for the content pages.
 - Allow the users to click on the Canada's Food Guide logo to bring them back to the home page or add a button to allow users to easily get back to the home page
 - Include the same images used for the four main sections on the home page in the right menu
 - Avoid using white spaces in the content pages
 - Include links at the top of the page that will bring users to the associated content on the page. This will highlight the content on the page and will avoid unnecessary scrolling.
 - Add vegetarian meal examples
 - Add recipes

Respondent Suggestions for Priority Changes – My Food Guide Interactive Tool

- At the end of each interview, respondents were asked to name up to five changes or improvements to Canada's Food Guide website and the My Food Guide interactive tool which they considered to be most urgently needed. These changes are summarized below, for the My Food Guide tool.
 - Move the instructions for each page of the activity below the recommendation box.
 - Clarify the meaning of the two columns on the final print out (e.g. My Numbers and My Examples).
 - Allow a user to select more than 6 items for each category, more specifically for the fruit and vegetables and grain categories.
 - Add the ability to include the name on the print out
 - Add calorie content for food portions